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DETROIT

How Culpable Is "Ignorance"?

WE hope our readers will find illumination in the further critique of the much-discussed (and little-read) Kinsey volumes on sex, in the interchange between Dr. Niebuhr and Dr. Seward Hiltner on the following pages.

Both Dr. Niebuhr and Dr. Hiltner agree that the heart of the matter lies in what Dr. Niebuhr (in his earlier article in this journal) had defined as Dr. Kinsey's "ignorance" of the true nature of sex in human life: his almost total disregard of the organic connections of the biological aspects of sex with intellectual, spiritual, moral and social aspects, his "presupposition" that all there is to sex in human behavior is physiological expression and sensual satisfaction.

However, it may be suggested that the use of the word "ignorance" in this connection is unfortunate. "Ignorance" is an ambiguous term. Strictly speaking, it connotes lack of knowledge which the ignorant person could not be expected to possess. But it is often used in a wider sense to indicate failure to take account of facts or truths which the "ignorant" person knew well enough, or in any event, might have and should have known. And it is in this vaguer and not quite accurate sense that Dr. Niebuhr appears to apply it to Dr. Kinsey; otherwise, how could he speak of "my exasperation with Kinsey's ignorance." Is it credible that any person could hold a college degree even in science, or could possess the most work-a-day and pedestrian acquaintance with human literature and human history, or could interview some thousands of men and women about the most intimate facts of their sexual lives without being well aware of the dimensions of sex in human beings which far transcend physiological satisfaction? Dr. Kinsey's offense cannot be that of "ignorance," but rather of deliberate disregard of one of the most elemental, universal and obvious truths of human nature; and the attempt to persuade or confirm his readers in that same attitude. We are here brought hard up against one of the most difficult and yet also most important problems of ethics—responsibility for facts or truths which a person may not at a given moment recognize, but

which he has known or should have known and therefore is blameworthy for denying or disregarding.

Current discussions of the Kinsey writings on sex reveal all too clearly that this kind of "ignorance" is not confined to Dr. Kinsey. It applies hardly less to great numbers of those who have accepted his presuppositions unthinkingly or have welcomed his conclusions uncritically. In the widespread response to Dr. Niebuhr's earlier article, nothing is more striking, or more disquieting, than the large number of correspondents, not a few of them national leaders in education, in public affairs and in philanthropy, who confess that they had not previously recognized the radically animalistic and therefore utterly inadequate and absurd premises upon which the whole Kinsey inquiry is being conducted. But, as intelligent and educated men and women with some acquaintance with human history, literature and experience, can they justify themselves in this "ignorance"?

It should require no special knowledge or competence to convince anyone not only that sex is one of the most powerful and unruly forces in man's nature, but also that it is intimately involved in every phase of man's being — intellectual, moral, aesthetic and social no less than physical; that its use portends immeasurable weal or woe for each person; and that, even under the most favorable circumstances of individual inheritance, upbringing and stability, it can fulfill its true function only under the direction of responsible, deliberate and difficult discipline, whether within or outside marriage. Moreover, it should require no testimony of educators or moralists to convince anyone that the impulses of sex are so imperious and so productive of self-deception and rationalization that the dissemination of false views of sex, especially under the aegis of scientific authority, will in fact encourage and aggravate practices justified by those views. We are without excuse if we do not know enough about mankind and its age-long struggle for a higher life to comprehend all this without instruction or argument.

At the time of the issue of the first Kinsey book, five years ago, an editorial in this journal under the caption, "The Moratorium on Moral Revulsion," sought to raise this issue. It may not be inappropriate to repeat part of what was then said: "The most disturbing thing about the current vogue of *The Sexual Behavior of the Human Male* is not the facts it sets forth. The most disturbing thing is the absence of a spontaneous ethical revulsion from the premises of the study, and the inability on the part of its readers to put their fingers on the falsity of those premises. For the presuppositions of the Kinsey Report are strictly animalistic; this bias underlies the Introduction and controls the interpretation at every point. This points both to a widespread deadening of ethical sensibility which might prompt a vigorous moral disclaimer, and to absence of a well-grounded conviction which would make possible a reasoned and valid refutation. It suggests how generally those who do not practice naturalistic hedonism in their own lives are unable to confute naturalistic hedonism with their minds and unwilling to challenge it with their spirits. In reaction from exaggerated prudery, we have slipped into convictionless complacency."

Dr. Niebuhr was correct in suggesting that the data of the Kinsey books discloses how far advanced is "the decay of the family" in contemporary American society. It might be added that the response to the Kinsey premises reveals how far advanced is ethical nihilism and irresponsibility in the contemporary American consciousness. H.P.V.D.

EDITORIAL NOTES

In the discussion of Roman Catholic claims and Roman Catholic power it is important to realize that the Roman Church today is deeply divided on the question of religious liberty. It is the traditional position of the Church that, since error has no rights, the Church should seek for itself a privileged position and, where it represents a large majority of the population, it should use its influence with the state to deprive religious minorities of the right to teach their religion publicly. Such minorities might have the right to worship, but any public expressions of religion which would influence those outside a particular religious group would on this basis be forbidden. Knowledge that the traditional teaching of the Roman Church does lead to this result is a fundamental reason for the widespread Protestant fear of Catholic power.

This traditional view is, however, being challenged in the Church. It is still the dominant view in Spain but we have seen recently very sharp exchanges between American Catholics and Spanish Catholics on this very point. A more liberal view of the matter

is quite general in France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, England and several other countries. It is often suspected by Protestants that liberal Catholic attitudes toward the issue of religious liberty are merely an adjustment to circumstances. Catholic scholars in this country have been working on a theoretical basis for religious liberty which goes far beyond the acceptance of it as a concession to circumstances. Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., has elaborated a view of the matter which provides a principle for religious liberty for religious minorities. Last summer a blast from Cardinal Ottaviani from inside the Vatican defending the rigid Spanish view of religious liberty caused much consternation among both Catholics and Protestants in this country.

The admirable Catholic weekly, *The Commonweal*, calls attention to recent words of the Pope which appear to be on the more liberal side. The Pope laid down the following two principles: "First, what does not correspond to truth and the moral norm objectively has no right either to existence, to propaganda, or to action. Second, nevertheless, in the interest of a higher and broader good, it is justifiable not to impede this error by state laws and coercive measures." *The Commonweal* is probably right in taking a hopeful view of those words but they would be clearer if the Pope had said "not justifiable to impede"!

In terms of global military strategy there is doubtless much to be said for military aid to Pakistan. The difficulty is that the way in which this matter has been handled threatens the broader strategy by which we must seek to serve the freedom of Asia. It should be axiomatic for any such broader strategy that the key to Asia's future is the freedom of India. If India in the next five or ten years becomes Communist, nothing that we may do in terms of military strategy can make up for that loss; India herself cannot be saved by military power. If she does go Communist it will be through conspiracy and revolution within the country. One factor might be the success of the Communists in elections in two or three provinces. Only constructive measures which give the people hope that there is an alternative to Communism in dealing with the social and economic problems of the country can prevent the loss of India. It is also important to do everything possible to overcome the idea that is common in India that America is itself an imperialistic threat. Confusion on this point produces a neutralism that is an ally of Communism. Imagination and understanding in dealing with India have been lacking in our own foreign policy even though we have done many good things as part of our foreign aid program. J.C.B.

Niebuhr on Kinsey

SEWARD HILTNER

IN commenting on the recent article by Reinhold Niebuhr, "Sex and Religion in the Kinsey Report," it should be said at the outset that I do not regard my position as fundamentally different from Niebuhr's. On the other hand, some of the things he has said, and others he has failed to say, may not do justice either to Kinsey or to the Christian view of sex. I trust that my comment, along with Niebuhr's, will move in the direction of clarifying the issues, and that it will not appear, on the one hand, as a basic criticism of Niebuhr, or, on the other hand, as a picayunish preoccupation with unimportant details.

My comment is divided into three parts, corresponding to the three topics discussed by Niebuhr: critique of Kinsey's presuppositions, discussion of some Kinsey findings, and exposition of the Christian view of sex.

Niebuhr's main concern (and indignation) is with Kinsey's presuppositions. These rest, he believes, in a "consistent naturalism" that gives rise to a "crude hedonism." When he writes that the Kinsey presuppositions are "not so much a considered frame of reference" as they are a "scheme of thought into which he was betrayed by ignorance," he is entirely correct. But in asserting that Kinsey believes in a "vulgar" or "absurd hedonism," that "the achievement of sexual pleasure becomes the *summum bonum* of his value scheme," Niebuhr is in danger of obscuring the issues that Kinsey presents to us.

There is at least a strong probability that Kinsey has a "biologistic" overtone in his view of sex. And a number of his remarks (such as the use of terms like "acceptable" and "tolerate") suggest that he has a bias in favor of any kinds or forms of sex expression not obviously or crudely harmful to the individual or to others. But the charge of a crude hedonism must involve more than these. Niebuhr supports his opinion chiefly by reference to what Kinsey fails to say. For example, noting that Kinsey makes many comparisons between sex practices of higher mammals and those of human beings, he points out that he makes no explicit comments on the distinctively human features of sex apart from such physiological ones as the uniquely human capacity of the human female for orgasm. It is certainly true that Kinsey says little or nothing about the most distinctively human aspects of sex (in Niebuhr's terms, the uniquely human capacities for "dignity" and for "misery"). But the absence of such remarks, while tending to support a diagnosis of biologism, is not sufficient to warrant the charge of hedonism.

In keeping with his conception of science, it is Kinsey's clear intention to possess no view at all at the level of hedonism or its opposite. His discussion of "sexual outlets," he would contend, must be understood methodologically not on an evaluative basis. The selection (abstraction) of certain aspects of sex for study by his methods should be interpreted, I think he would contend, as not necessarily implying any greater human value to what is selected than to what is omitted. He would say that it is not the scientist's business to make evaluations.

The difficulty arises of course in that Kinsey's performance is by no means always consistent with his intention. To use Niebuhr's term, his "ignorance" that he is implying things at a level he attempts to avoid altogether produces the difficulty. Were he less ignorant of the level he tries to avoid, he might succeed in doing so. As it is, he drifts toward such a level, with no awareness of what is occurring. But such drifting comes from "ignorance" and from what could be called an "idolatry of science." If it is not a result of a perverse misunderstanding of human freedom, or of a conscious acceptance of a "crude naturalism," then it is doubtful if hedonism is a fair word to describe the position. A positivism may distort as much as a hedonism but they are not the same things.

Niebuhr's chief point about Kinsey and science is entirely justified. This is that an application of the "methods of science" as understood in the "natural sciences" to the human person and human history, if these are presumed to be adequate and exhaustive, is likely to distort, and that Kinsey tends to do just this. Plainly, Niebuhr is not against science, nor against what science can teach us in the "field of the humanities." But since even humanistic science can not touch the full dimensions of human life and history, he warns against any idolatry of science that promises such results or that denies the relevance of other perspectives.

Although Niebuhr is correct in this basic point, he is in some danger of misinterpreting the function that Kinsey's type of scientific enterprise may legitimately perform. Niebuhr's danger at this point is shared by the "clinical scientists," such as the psychiatrists. The really great discoveries and hypotheses about such matters as sex have been made, in modern times, by the clinical people, who deal with total or concrete human beings in their (more or less) full human dimensions. Studies like Kinsey's, in contrast, deal with abstracted elements of human experience. To the clinician, the findings of Kinsey-type studies inevitably appear either to be elabora-

tions of the obvious or neglect of the significant. This is because the clinician, is, properly enough, not only scientist but also (whether he admits it or not) therapist, educator, and philosopher. As a kind of clinician myself, I have a deep sympathy for this kind of feeling.

Yet I would contend that Kinsey-type studies can reveal significant material that the clinical-type studies can, at best, only adumbrate. One illustration in the Kinsey studies is the new light shed, by his abstractive procedures, on some aspects of the sexual presuppositions and attitudes of different social classes. There is nothing wrong with abstractive methods so long as one remembers, at all times, that he is abstracting from something that far transcends the abstraction. Indeed, some types of data (including "taxonomic" data) can be made available only through abstractive methods. Although there is nothing in Niebuhr's comments that would deny validity to abstractive methods in the study of man so long as one remembers the abstraction, he seems so fearful we may forget this that he appears to discourage such procedures. I would contend that the findings of such abstractive studies are largely meaningless until interpreted from points of view that transcend the selected abstractions, and the investigator himself may not be equipped for this task. But I want to make sure that this type of study is not itself ruled out as distorting just because it abstracts.

Admittedly as a minor note in his discussion, Niebuhr nevertheless does make brief comment on aspects of Kinsey's findings. He mentions three types of findings: that the younger generations are "freer" in their sex relations; that there is a "decay of the family"; and that religious interest and activity appear to affect and decrease most types of sexual activity even "beyond and above specific requirements of moral law."

As to the "freer" sex activity of young (unmarried) people, Niebuhr says the "rigorists must learn more tolerance." His ground for this position is, however, curious in that this is held to be "one of the peripheral areas" of sex. The context implied by "peripheral" is obviously marriage, the covenant of marriage, and the social responsibility necessary for the family. Although I would stand with Niebuhr against the "rigorists" or the moralistic purists, a view of pre-marital sexual activity as "peripheral" may unwittingly deny the full human and serious meaning of sex in itself. This may unintentionally imply that sex itself, even when true to its own nature as *human* sexuality, does not involve the whole personality. Such a position would approach a "spiritism," as alien to the Christian understanding as is a "biologism." Being against both biologism and spiritism is part of Niebuhr's position. But the

ground for attacking the "rigorists" needs to be stated in terms other than the "peripheral" nature of non-marital sex activity. It needs to be stated that the marriage covenant recognizes but does not create the inherent "seriousness" of sex in human life.

Niebuhr twice mentions that Kinsey's findings point to a decay of the family. This is an inference, as Kinsey does not use such terms. Kinsey does document certain kinds of changes (e.g., an increase in extra-marital sex relations) that warrant a "decay" type of conclusion. But he also presents some findings that can be used on the other side e.g., more married women are having sex satisfaction in marital relationships, married men resort less often to prostitutes, patterns of sex activity within marriage appear to be growing more mutual and less patriarchal, etc. Certainly the older type of family stability, with its patriarchal overtones, is decaying. But that this movement is not entirely negative is suggested by Niebuhr's own remark that many of the marriages now being consummated in earlier years are proving successful.

Probably the crucial point is that the patterns of women's sex life are approaching those of men more than before, thus also producing some change in men's patterns as a consequence. That is, the "emancipation" of women brings with it a freedom to misuse, as well as a freedom to fulfill, what was previously not present because of specific restrictions. That the use of this freedom is ambiguous, we must concede and proclaim. But merely viewing with alarm the decay in "stability" of the older type family may be partially to misunderstand the new trend. Apart from the obvious sociological matters (increase in divorce, etc.), I would contend that the real "decay" in the family is in the decline of any "sacramental" conception both of the family and of sex. The gains lie in the increase of the romantic attitude in alliance with a companionship conception, implying that love, trust, friendship and companionship over the whole gamut of life's experience is a normative consideration. In indicating that sexual relations are "intolerable if undertaken without mutual respect and ultimately without mutual fidelity," Niebuhr is in some danger of implying that we find this normatively in operation through western history. Actually this is a recent achievement, which can, however, become positive only if linked to a sacramental view of sex and marriage. Our standards of "romance" and "companionship" are good in intent, but are ambiguous in achievement because they are largely idolatrous substitutions for the sacramental "mystery" of sex and marriage as the Bible understands it.

As to Kinsey's findings about the correlation between religious interest and lower rates of sexual

activity, Niebuhr appears to be pleased by this as evidence of a "sense of personal responsibility for covenants." As a matter of fact, Kinsey's evidence is not always clear on this point, especially as to the relation between religious interest and sex life within marriage; and his scientific thinking is ambiguous in that his data show only correlations while his interpretation at times suggests cause and effect relationships. But if it should prove true that interest in religion tends to cast a generalized inhibitory tone around sex, even in marriage, it is hard to see why this should cause rejoicing. Among other things, this would tend to justify Kinsey's accusation against both Judaism and Christianity as being inherently "ascetic" in their attitudes toward sex, "justifying" sex activity only by reference to "propagation." That is not the way I read the Christian view, normatively speaking.

As to Niebuhr's own view of sex, or his understanding of the Christian view of sex, his article is necessarily brief; and any fair interpretation of his view must take his whole position into account. At the most basic points, I agree entirely with Niebuhr. And yet, in some things he has written, I am forced to conclude that his indignation over Kinsey's implicit philosophy has prevented him from following through the implications of his own position.

His remarks about the uniquely human dimensions of sex, for good or for ill, are fundamental. So are those about the "characteristically human forms of inordinancy" — the greater the freedom, the greater its chances of misuse.

His statement, however, that there is good scriptural authority for "combining strictness in the maintenance of a standard and sympathy for the offender," seems to be true if interpreted in one way but misleading if interpreted in another way. Since Niebuhr's position (about everything) is anti-legalistic, it is clear that the above statement ought not to be interpreted as an arbitrary "strictness" which manages, however, to be tempered with mercy when it approaches real people. As I understand Niebuhr's general position, the "strictness" is never arbitrary but is the true and essential law of our being precisely because it is God's law. The "sympathy" is never weakness or softness, but is a necessary corollary of the recognition of sinfulness as well as finiteness. Thus, there is a dialectical kind of relationship between "strictness" and "sympathy," not a merely chronological notion under which we may be "strict" on some occasions and "sympathetic" at others.

If this statement approximates the way in which Niebuhr understands the relationship between "strictness" and "sympathy," then I am in complete agreement. But the fact has been that a different kind of relationship between strictness and sympathy has

proved, especially on sexual matters, to be the last resort of legalism. In not explicitly repudiating the legalistic interpretation of this relationship so far as sex is concerned, therefore, Niebuhr may be giving aid and comfort which would be denied by the implications of his position in general.

Something similar seems to be the case in Niebuhr's understanding of the family. Since he is not legalistic, his concern for the family must always be more than a "social solidarity" concern of the Roman Catholic type. But if such an implication is to be avoided, then one must avoid any trace of the notion that sex is "justified" by its service to the family as a social institution. Niebuhr could be more explicit on this point.

Clearly aware that the Christian and Protestant view of sex is not legalistic in character, Niebuhr seems inclined to slide too lightly over the fact (partially documented by Kinsey) that the actual attitudes of most Protestants are as legalistic in nature as those of Roman Catholics. Since legalism in other types of attitudes has not been broken into except by plain speaking concerning the subject at hand, this seems unlikely to happen with sex attitudes without similar plain speaking. If actually existing attitudes of Protestants are as legalistic as Kinsey finds them (and as I believe them to be), then little can be gained by slurring the fact.

As I see the Christian view of sex, it can not be rigoristic and legalistic on the one side nor anarchical and loose on the other. It holds that sex in itself (in its human dimensions) is serious (for good or for ill), that it can never be taken casually (as in promiscuity) or flatly (as by withholding) without distorting its nature, that it is sacramental (through it God revealing depths of one's self, of another and, by implication, of all others), and that it is, ultimately, a mystery how total spirit can be revealed and enhanced through biological experience. Sex is not an external but an internal relationship, since we are members one of another. As sex is finally intolerable without love, so sex in its full human dimensions makes for love. Sex is to be intense and steadfast, with a close relationship between these qualities. There is nothing in Niebuhr that seems to me to contradict such an understanding, but neither do all these points appear to be explicit.

In his comments on Kinsey, Niebuhr seems to me to deal too lightly with the challenge that the Christian view of sex is mostly misunderstood by Christians. He does not explicitly dissociate himself from Kinsey's understanding of the Christian view of sex as ascetic in tone. He accuses Kinsey of a hedonistic view which seems to stretch Kinsey's biologism and positivism too far. And since his statement of the Christian view of sex is more implicit, some of his remarks might be interpreted to

give aid and comfort where not intended. Let us, by all means, give Kinsey the "works." But let us run no risk of not having available the kind of findings that emerge from the Kinsey studies.

More on Kinsey

I should like to make it plain that the Editorial Board invited Professor Hiltner to make this rejoinder to my criticism of the Kinsey Report. It did so both because he has made the subject of the Christian view of sex his special field of competence and because, though in basic agreement with me, his estimate of the Kinsey Report differs from mine in that he sees some value in it while I see none at all.

He values it because he is, as I am, critical of traditional attitudes on sex, particularly the undue note of prurience and asceticism. He thinks that Kinsey may serve the purpose of leavening the lump of Christian legalism. I, on the other hand, declared that there is a case to be made against Christian legalism, prurience and asceticism, but that Kinsey cannot make it because his position is too absurdly hedonistic. This is analogous to the fact that a case can legitimately be made against western democracy; but communism cannot make that case. Its efforts to do so merely arouse western proponents of democracy to complacency; as Kinsey's criticism arouses Christian legalists to an uncritical defense. In each case, the criticism is made from a point of view so absurd, that the criticized one does not have to re-examine his position seriously.

This is the main point of difference between Professor Hiltner and myself. On every other point we are in essential agreement; so much so, in fact, that I suspect Professor Hiltner of surmising possible disagreements in emphasis in order to make the argument more interesting. He thinks, for instance, that it would be more telling to accuse Kinsey of "biologism" rather than hedonism, since, in Hiltner's opinion, the hedonism is implicit rather than explicit, and is revealed more by what Kinsey omits than by what he says. I would challenge this assertion. The hedonism is quite explicit in dozens of tables in which Kinsey justifies pre-marital sexual relations by trying to prove that they contribute to a greater frequency of orgasm in marital relations. In fact, the achievement of orgasm is consistently made into a kind of *summum bonum* throughout the inquiry. In my opinion this is both an explicit and an absurd hedonism.

Professor Hiltner erroneously believes that I have criticized Kinsey for an inquiry which abstracts certain facets of the sex experience from the whole fabric of sexual life. I made no such criticism; and I am ready to concede that his material may be helpful in many respects. I objected not to the nature

of the inquiry but to the ridiculous and ignorant presuppositions which informed it and determined his conclusions. Kinsey is so naive in his approach to human and historical problems that he seems unaware of the fact that the presuppositions of an inquiry, in any historical study, do determine the results even more than the data. Consequently, the data gathered on the presupposition that sexual pleasure could be enhanced if only the "home, church and school" did not introduce "inhibitions" and prompt "regrets," prompt him to engage in a constant polemic against the proponents of standards which inhibit sexual pleasure. The whole performance is informed by such an ignorance of the complexity of every human and historical problem, as distinguished from the relations in the natural world, that one must come to the conclusion that an apprenticeship in investigating gall wasps is not a sufficient preparation for guiding mankind in a very complex problem of relating the strong and biologically based sexual impulse to the whole range of creative human aspirations, to human relations and to the basic institutions of human society.

Most of Professor Hiltner's other points carry concern lest my polemic against Kinsey give aid and comfort to Christian legalists and to a morbid and prurient attitude toward sexual problems. They therefore consist in effect of saying "This is probably what Niebuhr means but let us be sure that he does." In almost every case I can answer: "This is what I mean and how could you doubt it!"

Thus, for instance, he thinks that something more ought to be said about the relation of strictness in observing the marriage vow and sympathy for a possible offender against it, which I saw illustrated in Jesus' attitude toward the woman taken in adultery. He wants to be sure that "strictness" does not connote "legalism" and that sympathy does not connote "softness". Strictness in observing the marriage vow means simply that we accept, as Jesus did, the basic idea of fidelity in the marriage relation. This would exclude Kinsey's and the currently popular idea that extra-marital relations would do no harm if only the partners were sufficiently "strong-minded", whatever that may mean. There is a long record of the experience of sophisticated people who defied the "convention" of marital fidelity under the illusion that it was a mere "convention" only to discover that an explicit grant of freedom to each other by the marital partners did not solve the problem that an intimate and basic partnership would be damaged by infidelity, no matter what the explicit grant of freedom may have been. This is a case in which highly sophisticated people are incapable of understanding their own deep and complex emotions which simpler people take for granted. Mr. Hiltner is equally concerned that "sympathy" be not equated

with "softness". In order to make that clear, one would have to elucidate the whole paradoxical relation between forgiveness and justice. I thought that the simple words of Jesus, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone" would be rather more definitive of the nature of forgiveness than anything one might say. But I grant that the legalists, on the one hand, do not understand forgiveness, while the anti-legalists frequently sentimentalize forgiveness to the point where basic standards are obscured.

Professor Hiltner is also concerned about my observation upon the "decay" of the family and he rightly points out that some of the evidence points to the growth of greater mutuality and equality between men and women in the family. He thinks there is a danger that I might assume, or be thought to assume, that the "western" type of family is normative, and that any departure from it represents decay. I do not think that I said anything which would indicate my belief in the normative quality of the traditional family "mores". One might say that the stability of the family in past western history was supported by three factors 1) the stabilities of an agrarian civilization, 2) the pattern of male dominance, and 3) the sacramental conception of marriage maintained in terms of law, involving the idea of the indissolubility of marriage as fixed by the standard of "natural law". All three conditions of stability have disintegrated. The family must maintain itself amidst the hazards of a technical urban civilization. The emancipation of women including the possibility of their choosing an alternative vocation to that of mother and housewife or of combining another vocation with that of housewife, have given the family two centers of authority rather than one. If this works, the resulting family relation will be on a higher plane than the traditional family in which paternal authority is the sole force of cohesion. Finally Protestantism has sought to preserve the sacramental conception of the marriage relation without supporting and corrupting it by making the indissolubility of marriage a matter of inflexible law. We say "corrupting it" because a relation rooted in love is maintained by grace and can become intolerable where love is lacking. We are not impressed with the record of monogamy in catholic countries where marriage is indeed indissoluble but where the popular mores tolerate what amounts to concubinage, provided wives and mistresses are in different households.

Mr. Hiltner is quite right in arguing that when monogamy is preserved against the modern hazards it is likely to be a more ideal marriage than the "traditional" one, supported by factors which were essentially extraneous to the marriage sacrament. He cannot deny nevertheless that the institution of monogamy is seriously threatened because "grace"

has not been sufficient to preserve the integrity of the family against modern hazards and without the support of essentially extraneous forces. Mr. Hiltner is right in calling attention to this particular facet of the issue. I will admit that my exasperation with Kinsey's ignorance prevented me from dwelling on it. I believe my experience is typical of the reaction to Kinsey generally. That is the heart of my criticism. An ignorant approach to a complex issue cannot be creative. It prevents rather than encourages a consideration of the real issues.

R.N.

CHURCH NEWS AND NOTES

World Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

(EPS) The 1954 "Prayer for Christian Unity" for the World Week of Prayer (January 18-25) will once more be the work of Abbe Paul Couturier, founder of the movement, who died last March.

The new material will "seek to call the blessing of the Holy Spirit on the Evanston Assembly," according to Fr. Maurice Villain, who is publishing the material, "just as he asked us two years ago to turn our prayer to the Lund Conference" (Faith and Order). "We shall likewise recall," continues Fr. Villain, "in a spirit of contrition and of Christian love, the nine hundred years of the Eastern schism. It is once more the thought of Evanston which has determined the emphasis of the Holy Hour, on hope. And the ikon of Christ glorified, His gesture reminding us that He died upon the Cross—the design is by Eric de Saussure, one of the Brethren of Taize—sums up the Sole Hope of the Church and the world."

The 1954 pamphlet notes that "we are face to face with a new historical phenomenon, unique in the annals of Christianity—that of all the Christian groups climbing, independent yet parallel, of gigantic spiritual powers of intercession all converging on that same gigantic sorrow, the separation of Christians, and that same intense yearning, for the coming of the visible oneness of the Kingdom of God as Christ desires it, by such means as He shall desire!"

There are, in this year of 1954, continues Fr. Villain, "two great ecumenical subjects for which we are asked to pray."

"In August, 1954, the World Council of Churches, representing practically all the non-Catholic Christian groups, and carrying on a work which is clearly inspired by the Holy Spirit, is to hold its second General Assembly in Evanston, United States. The theme, 'Christ the Hope of the World,' is of the highest importance for the future of the ecumenical movement. Let us pray God that that theme be considered in all the fullness of Revelation—it is Christ, crucified and risen, Who is the Hope of the Church and the world." The pamphlet suggests that those using it shall join in the intercession proposed by the organizers of the Assembly, asking God to bless those responsible for its organization and to bless the enterprise itself.

The second subject relates to the rupture between the Church of Rome and the Eastern Orthodox Churches

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in 1054. "Whatever its very complex causes," runs the pamphlet, "let us simply admit that we are all responsible for its continuation, and that we must all ask of God that it may eventually come to an end. Let us realize all the spiritual treasures developed by those Churches, which a recovery of unity would enable us to offer up together to our Lord."

Pamphlets can be obtained free of charge from Abbé Vincent, rue Royet 5, Lyons. However, contributions to cover cost of printing and mailing would be welcome.

Interfaith Program to Combat Religious and Racial Tensions

(EPS) Three national women's organizations have joined hands in sponsoring a new \$10,000 program designed to ease racial and religious tensions through cooperative projects in local communities. Participating in the national program will be United Church Women, the National Council of Jewish Women and the National Council of Negro Women. The three groups will act through a Committee on Community Projects of the Necchi Foundation.

Under the new program, grants of \$5,000, of \$3,000 and of \$2,000 will be given to advance three local projects which are improving community life. The projects may be of any size so long as they encourage people in the community to work cooperatively together. They may be of any kind—a new clinic or hospital equipment, a playground or community center, an educational program for newcomers to this country, vocational training to help community residents get better jobs, or any other project to better the community. The grants will be made on the basis of how worthwhile the project is to the community; how much the local citizens are involved in it; how well its aims are achieved, or how good the prospects are that its aims will be achieved; and how great an impact the project will have in terms of continuing cooperation and good relations among community groups.

The Committee on Community Projects was established at the urging of a noted community consultant, Dr. Max Wolff of the Center for Human Relations at New York University, after a survey of 1,800 U. S. communities showed that religious, racial and other intergroup tensions were on the increase. The Necchi Foundation was established by Leon Jolson, president of the Necchi Sewing Machine Sales Corporation, who came to the U. S. as a displaced person and now has set up the foundation as his gift to his new country. United Church Women is the lay women's arm of the National Council of Churches.

Copies of a reprint of "The Doctrine of The Church and The Problem of Culture," by J. Coert Rylaarsdam, are now available in the Christian Action office, 537 West 121st St., New York 27, New York. We recommend the article to our subscribers for its perceptive discussion of the Church as a divine reality in contemporary society. The article was originally published in *Christianity and Society*, Autumn, 1953; Vol. 18, No. 4. It is available at 5c per copy; at \$1.00 per 25 copies.

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Author In This Issue

Seward Hiltner is Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology, Federated Theological Faculty, at the University of Chicago, Illinois.